



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

For Immediate Release

July 27th, 2007

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Rep. Shuler Announces Additional Aid to Communities Affected by Easter Weekend Freeze

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Heath Shuler today announced that farm-related and nonfarm-related small businesses and small agricultural cooperatives in Cherokee, Graham, Haywood, Madison, Swain, and Yancey Counties that suffered economic injury as a direct result of the Easter Weekend Freeze are eligible for SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program.

"The freezing temperatures and devastating winds that hit Western North Carolina over the Easter Weekend affected our entire economy and entire communities. Hundreds of small businesses in these communities have lost revenue due to the freeze and these emergency disaster loans will provide the stability they need," said Rep. Shuler.

Rep. Shuler has written a letter to Steven Preston, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, requesting that the remaining counties that have been declared federal natural disaster areas -- Buncombe, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, and Transylvania Counties -- also be made eligible for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program.

SBA's disaster declaration was issued as a result of a similar action taken by the Secretary of Agriculture to help farmers recover from damages and losses to crops caused by record low temperatures and a deep freeze that occurred April 4th through April 11th, 2007.

Eligible small businesses will be able to qualify for loans of up to \$1.5 million available at a 4 percent interest rate with loan terms ranging up to 30 years. The conditions of such loans depend on the small business's size and type, as well as, their current financial resources. Farmers and ranchers are not eligible to apply to the SBA for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program.

Those who wish to apply should contact the SBA's Customer Service center by calling 1-800-659-2955 (or 1-800-877-8339 for the hearing-impaired), Monday through Friday from 8 am to 9 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 5:30 pm EDT. The requisite forms are also available to download online from the SBA's website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance. Once completed, applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center – 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

Applications should not be returned any later than February 15th, 2008.

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